

“ School health programs offer the opportunity to provide the services and knowledge necessary to enable children to be productive learners and to develop the skills to make health decisions for the rest of their lives” -National School Board Association (1995)

OVERVIEW

While the prevalence of the traditional childhood diseases have decreased over the past years, there have been new health problems emerge which have a negative influence on student achievement and success. These new health problems include an increase in chronic health conditions, such as asthma, allergies and diabetes, addictions, teen pregnancy, HIV/AIDS, STDs, suicide, auto accidents and injuries or deaths from violent acts. Many of these health problems are the result of poverty, homelessness, poor nutrition, lack of exercise, smoking, early and/or unprotected sexual activity, substance abuse, stress and depression.

The complex, fast-paced world that children and adolescents live in exposes them to significant health risks. Research has shown that these health risks impact student achievement. Health and education are interdependent. Therefore, school health programs play an integral role in student achievement and ⁽¹⁾ success.

Although parents have primary responsibility for their children’s health, other sectors, including education must support healthy lives for our children. The American School Health Association (ASHA) defines a school health program as “all the strategies, activities and services offered by, in or in association with schools that are designed to promote students’ physical, emotional, and social development.” ⁽²⁾